

(Washington, DC) Today, **Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar)** introduced the *Outpatient Mental Health Modernization Act of 2009*, a bill that requires Medicare to reimburse Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHPS) for providing transportation, food and nutritional services to psychiatric patients.
(Please find attached a copy of the bill)

PHPs provide a structured and clinically intensive alternative to hospitalization for patients who otherwise might require sustained inpatient psychiatric hospitalization. PHP psychiatric patients typically receive four to six hours of treatment per day, five to six days a week in hospital-based settings and community mental health centers. However, Medicare does not cover the costs of nutritional planning, meals or transportation. Therefore, PHP facilities are responsible for the cost of providing food and transportation.

Hastings commented, “The severity of the patient’s illness often prevents the individual from obtaining or seeking transportation to the PHP facility, or from accessing high quality food. Additionally, some psychiatric medications that are prescribed to the patient cannot be safely administered without food.”

The *Outpatient Mental Health Modernization Act of 2009* requires Medicare to reimburse PHPs for providing transportation and food and nutritional services. The bill also establishes a Behavioral Health Advisory Committee in which a diverse group of behavioral health stakeholders would examine and provide recommendations on how to address the persisting challenges of access, stigma, quality and operability in the mental health delivery system. The measure is a house companion to S. 1522, a bill that was introduced by Senator David Vitter (R-LA) on July 28, 2009.

“The growing use and role of mental health PHPs in our health care system requires that we amend the law to assist PHPs in delivering the services, care and support to those who are living with severe and chronic mental illness,” **Hastings further noted**.

Original co-sponsors: Reps. Kendrick B. Meek, John Barrow, Grace Napolitano, Shelia Jackson-Lee, Pete Stark, and Rodney Alexander.

The *Outpatient Mental Health Modernization Act of 2009* is supported by the National Association for Behavioral Health (NABH), Mental Health America, and the National Council for Community Behavioral Health Care.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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 [Rep Alcee L Hastings Outpatient Mental Health Moderization Act 12.16.09.pdf](#)